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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/636,037	08/09/2000	Nizar Allibhoy	005004.P019	5579

7590 06/15/2004

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EXAMINER

GREENE, DANIEL L

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3621

DATE MAILED: 06/15/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/636,037

Applicant(s)

ALLIBHOY ET AL.

Examiner

Daniel L. Greene

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llw

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 March 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 3/3/04 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The Applicant added to claims 1 and 16, permitting user interactivity, to further the limitation of enhanced television by specifying that it permits user interactivity versus standard television. The Applicant further states that enhanced television programming also includes a trigger that can alert the consumer that such programming is available. The Applicant submits that the type of programming/data renders an application patentable.

However these differences are only found in the nonfunctional descriptive material and are not functionally involved in the steps recited. The initiating a request , directing the programming/data to the user receiver, intercepting the programming/data and determining if a marker is present, determine if the data is in compliance with a set of third party parameters, permitting the programming/data to be received and preventing the programming/data from being received if not in compliance steps would be performed the same regardless of the data. Thus, this descriptive material will not distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art in terms of patentability, see *In re Gulack*, 703 F.2d 1381, 1385, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983); *In re Lowry*, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to initiate a request , directing the programming/data to the user receiver, intercepting the programming/data and determining if a marker is

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present, determine if the data is in compliance with a set of third party parameters, permitting the programming/data to be received and preventing the programming/data from being received if not in compliance steps would be accomplished regardless of the type of programming/data because such data does not functionally relate to the steps in the method claimed and because the subjective interpretation of the data does not patentably distinguish the claimed invention. Ginter '987 teaches about the protection of programming/data and the dissemination for profit utilizing 1st, 2nd, and 3rd parties.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ginter et al. US 5,910,987A [Ginter '987].

As per claim 1:

Ginter '987 discloses:

PTO's guidelines for examining claimed language require: the examiner must make a determination, whether the claimed language "as a whole" would have been

obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art. See MPEP 2142. In these pending claims, the examiner submits that the particular language, “enhanced content programming”, does not serve as a limitation on the claim. Enhanced content programming can be any kind/type of data that the user wants to acquire from a content provider and therefore non-limiting.

initiating a request for the enhanced content programming, said request initiated by the user receiver and directed at the content provider via the network, wherein the enhanced content programming includes enhanced television signal permitting user interactivity. Col. 189, lines 8-65.

Ginter ‘987 discloses the claimed invention, as discussed above, except for the step of wherein the enhanced content programming includes enhanced television signal permitting user interactivity. However, Ginter ‘987 teaches about a “virtual distribution environment”, VDE that secures, administers, and audits electronic information use. Col. 2, lines 25-30. Ginter ‘987 further discloses that major network providers, hardware manufacturers, owners of electronic information, providers of such information, etc can use VDE. Col. 3, lines 20-35. It would have been an obvious matter of design choice to modify the teachings of Ginter ‘987, to provide the step of wherein the enhanced content programming includes enhanced television signal permitting user interactivity. PTO’s guide lines for examining claimed language require: the examiner must make a determination, whether the claimed invention “ as a whole” would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art. See MPEP 2142. In these

pending claims, the examiner submits that the particular language (i.e., "enhanced television signal") does not serve as a limitation on the claim.

Since the applicant has not disclosed that wherein the enhanced content programming includes enhanced television signal permitting user interactivity, solves any stated problem in a new or unexpected way or is for any particular purpose which is unobvious to one of ordinary skill and it appears that the claimed feature does not distinguish the invention over similar features in the prior art since, the teachings of Ginter '987 will perform the invention as claimed by the applicant with any means, method, or product to wherein the enhanced content programming includes enhanced television signal.

directing the enhanced content programming responsive to said request at the user receiver via the network, said directing step performed by the content provider; Col. 309, lines 35-67, Col. 310, lines 1-67.

intercepting the enhanced content programming, said intercepting step performed by a third party and determining whether the enhanced content programming includes markers inserted by the content provider in response to information appended by the third party to the request; Col. 167-169, lines 1-67.

determining if the enhanced content programming complies with a set of third party parameters by examining the markers; Col. 171-172, lines 1-67.

permitting the enhanced content programming to be received by the user receiver if the enhanced content programming complies with said set of third party parameters; Col. 167-172, lines 1-67.

preventing the enhanced content programming from being received by the user receiver if the enhanced content programming does not comply with said set of third party parameters. Col. 167-172, lines 1-67.

As per claim 2:

Ginter '987 further discloses:

wherein said set of third party parameters is comprised of a set of business rules.

Fig, 2, 2A.

As per claim 3:

Ginter '987 further discloses:

wherein said set of third party parameters include the requirement of embedding a third party marker within the enhanced content programming. Col. 28, lines 5-10.

As per claim 4:

Ginter '987 further discloses:

wherein said preventing step further comprises the step of transmitting a set of third party requirements to the content provider. Fig. 73, Col. 238, lines 9-55.

As per claim 5:

Ginter '987 further discloses:

wherein said preventing step further comprises the step of directing said request to a substitute content provider. Col. 235-236, lines 1-57.

As per claim 6:

Ginter '987 further discloses:

wherein said set of third party parameters includes a set of receiver capabilities. Col. 58, lines 1-67.

As per claim 7:

Ginter '987 further discloses:

wherein said set of third party parameters includes a user profile associated with the user receiver. Col. 59, lines 1-67.

As per claim 8:

Ginter '987 further discloses:

wherein said set of third party parameters is comprised of a set of network specifications. Col. 91, lines 1-67.

2. Claims 9-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ginter '987 as applied to claims 1-8 above, and further in view of Webber, Jr. US 6,167,378 [Webber '378]

As per claim 9:

Ginter '987 discloses the claimed invention except for the extracting transaction information from said intercepted enhanced content programming, and storing said extracted transaction information in a database controlled by said third party.

Webber '378 teaches that it is known in the art to provide for extracting transaction information from said intercepted enhanced content programming, and storing said extracted transaction information in a database controlled by said third party. Col. 9, lines 12-25. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the system of electronic rights protection of Ginter '987 with the extracting transaction information from said intercepted enhanced content programming, and storing said extracted transaction

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information in a data base controlled by said third party of Webber '378, in order to conduct business and maintain accurate records of the transactions.

As per claim 10:

Ginter '987 discloses the claimed invention except for the step of displaying at least a portion of said extracted transaction information. Webber '378 teaches that it is known in the art to provide the step of displaying at least a portion of said extracted transaction information. Col. 12, lines 29-35.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the system of electronic rights protection of Ginter '987 with the step of displaying at least a portion of said extracted transaction information of Webber '378, in order to provide information to the user in reference to the transaction.

As per claim 11:

Ginter '987 discloses the claimed invention except for the step of wherein the network transaction is a financial transaction and said request is a purchase request, said method further comprising the step of entering said purchase request into a data base controlled by said third party.

Webber '378 teaches that it is known in the art to provide the step of wherein the network transaction is a financial transaction and said request is a purchase request,

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said method further comprising the step of entering said purchase request into a data base controlled by said third party. Col. 10, lines 20-25.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the system of electronic rights protection of Ginter '987 with the step of wherein the network transaction is a financial transaction and said request is a purchase request, said method further comprising the step of entering said purchase request into a data base controlled by said third party of Webber '378, in order to provide another example of how to use the Ginter '987 system.

As per claim 12.

Ginter '987 discloses the claimed invention except for the step of displaying at least a portion of said entered user purchase request. Webber '378 teaches that it is known in the art to provide the step of displaying at least a portion of said entered user purchase request. Col. 12, lines 29-35.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the system of electronic rights protection of Ginter '987 with the step of displaying at least a portion of said entered user purchase request of Webber '378, in order to provide information to the user in reference to the transaction.

As per claim 13:

Ginter '987 discloses the claimed invention except for the step of directing a request for additional information pertaining to said purchase request to the content provider, wherein said directing step is performed by said third party; receiving said additional information from the content provider; and storing said additional information in said third party controlled data base.

Webber '378 teaches that it is known in the art to provide the step of directing a request for additional information pertaining to said purchase request to the content provider, wherein said directing step is performed by said third party; receiving said additional information from the content provider; and storing said additional information in said third party controlled data base. Col. 13, lines 50-67, Col. 14, lines 1-43

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the system of electronic rights protection of Ginter '987 with the step of directing a request for additional information pertaining to said purchase request to the content provider, wherein said directing step is performed by said third party; receiving said additional information from the content provider; and storing said additional information in said third party controlled data base of Webber '378, in order to provide a method for requesting and storing information between participating entities.

As per claim 14.

Ginter '987 discloses the claimed invention except for the step of directing a request for updated information pertaining to said purchase request to the content provider, wherein said directing step is performed by said third party; receiving said updated information from the content provider; and storing said updated information in said third party controlled data base.

Webber '378 teaches that it is known in the art to provide the step of directing a request for updated information pertaining to said purchase request to the content provider, wherein said directing step is performed by said third party; receiving said updated information from the content provider; and storing said updated information in said third party controlled data base. Col. 13, lines 50-67, Col. 14, lines 1-43.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the system of electronic rights protection of Ginter '987 with the step of directing a request for updated information pertaining to said purchase request to the content provider, wherein said directing step is performed by said third party; receiving said updated information from the content provider; and storing said updated information in said third party controlled data base of Webber '378, in order to provide current information in the third parties data base.

As per claim 15:

Ginter '987 discloses the claimed invention except for the step of requesting finalization of said purchase request, finalizing said network transaction with the user receiver, wherein said finalizing step is performed by said third party and, providing finalized transaction information to the content provider by said third party. Webber '378 teaches that it is known in the art to provide the step of requesting finalization of said purchase request, finalizing said network transaction with the user receiver, wherein said finalizing step is performed by said third party and, providing finalized transaction information to the content provider by said third party.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the system of electronic rights protection of Ginter '987 with the step of requesting finalization of said purchase request, finalizing said network transaction with the user receiver, wherein said finalizing step is performed by said third party and, providing finalized transaction information to the content provider by said third party of Webber '378, in order to provide information to the content provider in reference to the transaction.

PTO's guidelines for examining claimed language require: the examiner must make a determination, whether the claimed language "as a whole" would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art. See MPEP 2142. In these pending claims, the examiner submits that the particular language, "enhanced content programming", does not serve as a limitation on the claim. Enhanced content

programming can be any kind/type of data that the user wants to acquire from a content provider and therefore non-limiting.

Ginter '987 discloses the claimed invention, as discussed above, except for the step of wherein the enhanced content programming includes enhanced television signal permitting user interactivity. However, Ginter '987 teaches about a "virtual distribution environment", VDE that secures, administers, and audits electronic information use. Col. 2, lines 25-30. Ginter '987 further discloses that major network providers, hardware manufacturers, owners of electronic information, providers of such information, etc can use VDE. Col. 3, lines 20-35. It would have been an obvious matter of design choice to modify the teachings of Ginter '987, to provide the step of wherein the enhanced content programming includes enhanced television signal permitting user interactivity. PTO's guide lines for examining claimed language require: the examiner must make a determination, whether the claimed invention " as a whole" would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art. See MPEP 2142. In these pending claims, the examiner submits that the particular language (i.e., "enhanced television signal") does not serve as a limitation on the claim.

Since the applicant has not disclosed that wherein the enhanced content programming includes enhanced television signal permitting user interactivity, solves any stated problem in a new or unexpected way or is for any particular purpose which is unobvious to one of ordinary skill and it appears that the claimed feature does not distinguish the invention over similar features in the prior art since, the teachings of Ginter '987 will perform the invention as claimed by the applicant with any means,

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method, or product to wherein the enhanced content programming includes enhanced television signal.

3. Claims 16-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ginter '987, and further in view of Dedrick US 6,016,509A [Dedrick '509]

As per claim 16:

Ginter '987 discloses the claimed invention, as discussed above, except for the step of wherein the enhanced content programming includes enhanced television signal permitting user interactivity. However, Ginter '987 teaches about a "virtual distribution environment", VDE that secures, administers, and audits electronic information use. Col. 2, lines 25-30. Ginter '987 further discloses that major network providers, hardware manufacturers, owners of electronic information, providers of such information, etc can use VDE. Col. 3, lines 20-35. It would have been an obvious matter of design choice to modify the teachings of Ginter '987, to provide the step of wherein the enhanced content programming includes enhanced television signal permitting user interactivity. PTO's guide lines for examining claimed language require: the examiner must make a determination, whether the claimed invention "as a whole" would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art. See MPEP 2142. In these pending claims, the examiner submits that the particular language (i.e., "enhanced television signal") does not serve as a limitation on the claim.

Since the applicant has not disclosed that wherein the enhanced content programming includes enhanced television signal permitting user interactivity. solves any stated problem in a new or unexpected way or is for any particular purpose which is unobvious to one of ordinary skill and it appears that the claimed feature does not distinguish the invention over similar features in the prior art since, the teachings of Ginter '987 will perform the invention as claimed by the applicant with any means, method, or product to wherein the enhanced content programming includes enhanced television signal.

Ginter '987 further discloses:

a receiver coupled to said network, said receiver submitting a user request for a portion of said enhanced content programming relating to the user transaction; Col. 189, lines 8-65.

a content provider coupled to said network, said content provider supplying said portion of said enhanced content programming relating to the user transaction in response to said user request; Col. 189, lines 8-65.

a third party controller coupled to said network for detecting triggers embedded within said portion of said enhanced content programming supplied by said content provider in response to said user request and for intercepting said portion of said enhanced content programming supplied by said content provider in response to said user request and for determining whether the enhanced content programming includes

markers inserted by the content provider in response to information appended by the third party to the request; Col. 167-172, lines 1-67.

Ginter '987 discloses the claimed invention except for the a data base controlled by said third party controller, said data base containing a set of third party parameters, and third party means for determining if said enhanced content programming complies with said set of third party means for preventing the enhanced content programming from being third party parameters by examining the markers; and third party means for preventing the enhanced content programming from being received by said receiver if the enhanced content programming supplied by said content provider does not comply with said set of third party parameters.

Dedrick '509 teaches that it is known in the art to provide a data base controlled by said third party controller, Col. 3, lines 35-50, said data base containing a set of third party parameters, Col. 3, lines 35-50, and third party means for determining if said enhanced content programming complies with said set of third party means for preventing the enhanced content programming from being third party parameters by examining the markers, Col. 3 and 4, lines 1-67, and third party means for preventing the enhanced content programming from being received by said receiver if the enhanced content programming supplied by said content provider does not comply with said set of third party parameters. Col. 4 and 4, lines 1-67.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the system for secure transaction management of Ginter '987 with a data base controlled by said third party controller, said data base containing

a set of third party parameters, and third party means for determining if said enhanced content programming complies with said set of third party means for preventing the enhanced content programming from being third party parameters by examining the markers; and third party means for preventing the enhanced content programming from being received by said receiver if the enhanced content programming supplied by said content provider does not comply with said set of third party parameters of Dedrick '509, in order to provide for the control of the transactions between users and content providers.

As per claim 17:

Ginter '987 discloses the claimed invention except for the wherein said third party comparing means and said third party preventing means are integrated into said third party controller. Dedrick '509 teaches that it is known in the art to wherein said third party comparing means and said third party preventing means are integrated into said third party controller. Col. 3, lines 35-67.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the system for secure transaction management of Ginter '987 with the wherein said third party comparing means and said third party preventing means are integrated into said third party controller of Dedrick ,509 in order to maintain the efficiency of the system.

As per claim 18:

Ginter further discloses:

third party means for transmitting a request for compliance with said third party parameters to said content provider if the enhanced content programming supplied by said content provider does not comply with said set of third party parameters. Col. 251, lines 1-60.

As per claim 19:

Ginter '987 discloses the claimed invention except for the third party means for extracting information relating to the user transaction from said user request and from said portion of said enhanced content programming provided by said content provider, said extracted information stored in said data base, and a display coupled to said receiver for displaying said portion of said enhanced content programming and for displaying said extracted information.

Dedrick '509 teaches that it is known in the art to provide a third party means for extracting information relating to the user transaction from said user request and from said portion of said enhanced content programming provided by said content provider, said extracted information stored in said data base, and a display coupled to said receiver for displaying said portion of said enhanced content programming and for displaying said extracted information.

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It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the system for secure transaction management of Ginter '987 with the third party means for extracting information relating to the user transaction from said user request and from said portion of said enhanced content programming provided by said content provider, said extracted information stored in said data base; and a display coupled to said receiver for displaying said portion of said enhanced content programming and for displaying said extracted information of Dedrick '509, in order to provide for a third party means for extracting information relating to the user transaction from said user request and from said portion of said enhanced content programming provided by said content provider, said extracted information stored in said data base, and a display coupled to said receiver for displaying said portion of said enhanced content programming and for displaying said extracted information.

As per claim 20:

Ginter further discloses:

wherein said receiver is selected from the group consisting of set-top boxes, telephones, PDAs, and computers. Col. 58, lines 13-35.

As per claim 21:

Ginter '987 further discloses:

wherein said network is selected from the group consisting of cable, fiber optics, telephone lines, terrestrial broadcast systems, and satellite broadcast systems. Col. 251, lines 60-67.

As per claim 22:

Ginter '987 discloses the claimed invention except for the wherein said third party controller obtains additional information from said content provider relating to the user transaction and stores said additional information in said data base. Dedrick '509 teaches that it is known in the art to provide wherein said third party controller obtains additional information from said content provider relating to the user transaction and stores said additional information in said database. Col. 3, lines 35-65. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the system for secure transaction management of Ginter '987 with wherein said third party controller obtains additional information from said content provider relating to the user transaction and stores said additional information in said data base of Dedrick '509, in order to provide wherein said third party controller obtains additional information from said content provider relating to the user transaction and stores said additional information in said data base.

As per claim 23:

Ginter '987 discloses the claimed invention except for wherein said third party controller finalizes the user transaction with said receiver and provides final transaction information to said content provider.

Dedrick '509 teaches that it is known in the art to provide wherein said third party controller finalizes the user transaction with said receiver and provides final transaction information to said content provider. Col. 6, lines 55-67.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the system for secure management transactions of Ginter '987 with the wherein said third party controller finalizes the user transaction with said receiver and provides final transaction information to said content provider of Dedrick '509, in order to wherein said third party controller finalizes the user transaction with said receiver and provides final transaction information to said content provider.

Examiner's Note: Examiner has cited particular columns and line numbers in the references as applied to the claims below for the convenience of the applicant.

Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested from the applicant, in preparing the responses, to fully consider the references in entirety as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the examiner.

Conclusion

4.

5. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Daniel L. Greene whose telephone number is 703-306-5539. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Thur. 8am-6pm.

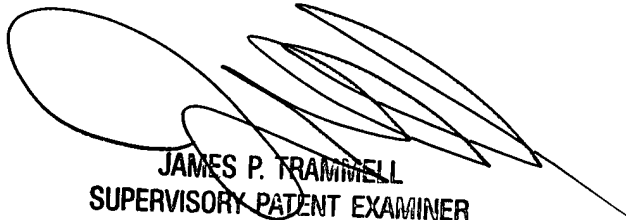
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James P. Trammell can be reached on 703-305-9768. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

6/1/04

DLG



JAMES P. TRAMMELL
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600